

**STATEMENT OF REP. STEVE COHEN**  
**HOUSE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE**  
**FEBRUARY 7, 2008**

The last year has brought to light numerous abuses at the Department of Justice (DOJ). From the suspicious terminations of nine U.S. Attorneys to evidence of possibly politically motivated prosecutions, the politicization of the hiring process for career DOJ attorneys, the sharp decline in civil rights enforcement, and the revelation of the existence of secret legal memoranda justifying the use of torture, the DOJ reached a low point in its history and ended 2007 with its reputation for professionalism and integrity tarnished. With a change in the leadership of the DOJ, I hoped that these abuses would be properly addressed.

I am appreciative of Attorney General Michael Mukasey's stated intention to establish a more cooperative relationship between the DOJ and Congress. I also recognize that he has taken some positive steps towards reducing the risk of politicization of federal law enforcement, including instituting guidelines that limit contact between DOJ and White House officials concerning ongoing civil and criminal investigations. Nonetheless, many questions remain concerning the DOJ's role in justifying the use of harsh interrogation techniques that I believe amount to torture, its continued defense of overweening executive authority, and its level of cooperation with ongoing Congressional and internal investigations of its conduct. I call upon Attorney General Mukasey to be forthcoming on these issues.